

Remarks

Reconsideration and allowance of this application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Applicants acknowledge with gratitude the indication that claims 7-9 contain allowable subject matter. Accordingly, the claims have been amended solely to expedite allowance of the application. Claim 1 has been amended to include the features previously recited in claim 7. Claim 7 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 8 has been amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs. Claim 15 has been added to define the needled filter material previously recited in claim 14. Claims 1-6 and 8-15 are now pending in the application. Claim 1 is independent.

The written description portion of the specification and the abstract of the disclosure have also been amended. The specification has been editorially amended for conformance with 37 CFR § 1.77(c), for consistency, and to correct any informalities. The abstract has been editorially amended for conformance with 37 CFR § 1.72(b). The claims have also been further amended for readability and to more fully comply with U.S. practice. No new matter has been introduced through the foregoing amendments. Entry of each of the amendments is respectfully requested.

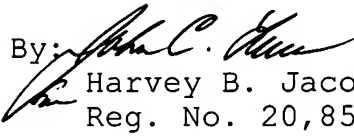
In view of the foregoing, this application is now in condition for allowance. If the examiner believes that an

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interview might expedite prosecution, the examiner is invited to
contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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